



**TOPS Working Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 4, 2016**

Members Present: Jason Alwine, Lee Milner, Cathy Grossman, Becky Wegner, Sarah Blakeslee, Nancy Hobbs, Joe Lavorini, Sarah Musick

Members Absent: Jeff Mohrmann

Alternates Present: Jim Klever

Alternates Absent: N/A

Parks Board Liaisons Present: Jackie Hilaire, Jason Rupinski

Parks Board Liaisons Absent: Scot Hume

Staff Present: Chris Lieber, Christi Mehew, Kurt Schroeder

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Jason Alwine brought the meeting to order at 7:33 a.m.

Agenda Preview

Announcements

Chris Lieber The Red Rock Canyon Revegetation Project is underway which addresses the repairs due to past flooding events. Tuesday, May 17th at Centennial Hall the El Paso County Board of Commissioners will be holding a public hearing regarding the designation of Corral Bluffs as a Colorado Natural Area. Please consider attending the hearing and/or sending an email in support.

Citizen Comments

Bill Koerner (Trails and Open Space Coalition) Thanked Park Staff for their letter of support regarding Ring the Peak. A project has started with city officials in Cripple Creek and Victor and on May 21st TOSC expects to receive input on where they would like to put the trails between Cripple Creek and Victor. The City's website is not providing detailed information with the TOPS Working Committee agenda. Christi Mehew, TOPS Working Committee Assistant, will work with Bill Koerner and Susan Davies to make sure the website page is accurate.

Susan Davies (Trails and Open Space Coalition) TOSC is co-sponsoring an event with El Pomar as part of the Heritage Series on Friday, May 13th at 3:00 p.m. at the Penrose House. Governor John Hickenlooper and Lise Aangeenbrug are special guest speakers. This is a free event, however, registration is required.

Richard Skorman – Thanked the TOPS Working Committee for encouraging the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to delay action on the Proposed Land Exchange with the Broadmoor.

City Council will be voting on this item on May 24th. This should go to the vote of the people and if so it would be a whole year until the election. The Broadmoor is not a willing seller yet, however the TOPS Working Committee should be a part of this matter.

Kent Obee – Thanked the TOPS Working Committee for their courage and commitment in regards to recommending to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to delay action on the Proposed Land Exchange with the Broadmoor. The TOPS Working Committee should have been a part of this process from the beginning. There has not been due diligence with this land swap. He read from the TOPS Policy and Procedure Manual a policy that states each member should visit each open space acquisition parcel that is being considered for acquisition.

Mike Dorsey – (Citizen and Real Estate Broker) Thanked the TOPS Working Committee for their decision to recommend to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to delay action on the Proposed Land Exchange with the Broadmoor. The process should have started with the TOPS Working Committee. Please look at the applications for funding that Richard Skorman submitted as this is a bad deal. There is a \$10-12 million dollar difference in valuation of the appraisals.

Approval of Minutes

1st – Sarah Blakeslee, 2nd – Cathy Grossman, Approved - Unanimous

Action Items

1. TOPS Policies and Procedures Manual Update (Presented by Chris Lieber – Parks Development Manager/TOPS Manager)

- Change the timeline for new appointees to the Committee so it aligns with the budget process. New committee members will start in the Fall.
- This will be on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board agenda for May as a discussion item and as an action item in June.
- Discussion included: TOPS Working Committee not formally recognized in the City Code; TOPS members and TOPS liaisons and city limit requirements; liaisons as non-voting participants; TOPS Working Committee consisting of a 9 member citizen committee.
- City Code 4.1.104 and 4.6.103 describes the role of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Citizen Advisory Committee. 4.1.104. states the Board can appoint temporary committees to review and advise the Board on various matters that may require additional citizen input or ongoing study, including assisting the Board in making recommendations to the City Council pursuant to the provisions of article 6 of this chapter. ([Please see attachment below](#)).
- Amendments: 1) Park Advisory Board liaisons are non-voting 2) TOPS Working Committee is a nine member citizens committee.

Motion: A motion recommending the proposed update and revisions to the TOPS Policies and Procedures Manual with the amendments added above.

1st – Cathy Grossman, 2nd – Becky Wegner, Approved – Unanimous

Presentations

2. Update on TOPS Stewardship Program (Presented by Melissa McCormick – Park Ranger)

- Three full-time seasonal rangers have been hired for the summer along with a full-time Ranger Supervisor. Duties include hiking open spaces, educating people about park policies and answering questions in regards to the natural resources in open spaces.
- Three seasonal conservation technicians have been hired and will focus on trail maintenance along with resource management, weed management and trail assessment.
- Contracted crews have begun work on noxious weeds.
- Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado have organized three projects on TOPS properties in Red Rock Canyon and University Park.
- Matt Mayberry will be providing an interpretative on TOPS properties which will give tools to volunteers and maintenance crews.
- Support supplies include purchasing one to two vehicles, backpack sprayers for herbicide use, computers for GIS work and uniforms.

Discussion included: stewardship budget; dog leash concerns; bark ranger program; better signage and communication with citizens regarding dog policies; involvement of friends groups and stewardship focused areas (resource management, land management, education and the ranger program).

3. Preliminary 2017 TOPS CIP Budget (Presented by Chris Lieber – Parks Development Manager/TOPS Manager)

The presentation included: the approval timeline; funding sources; informing the budget process; 2017 TOPS revenue estimates; recommended trail projects (Cottonwood Trail at Academy Underpass, Sinton Trail at Chestnut Underpass, Midland Trail South, Shooks Run Trail South; Cottonwood Trail - Austin Bluffs Underpass); recommended park projects (park maintenance, emergency repair, playground renovation and replacement, North Cheyenne Canon Master Plan Update and Austin Bluffs Open Space Master Plan) and recommended Open Space projects (Red Rock Canyon Open Space payment, Open Space acquisition account, Ute Valley Master Plan implementation, stewardship).

- May 12th the Parks, Recreation and Advisory Board will have a presentation.
- June 1st the TOPS Working Committee will vote on the budget as an action item.
- June 9th the Parks, Recreation and Advisory Board will vote on the budget as an action item.
- The advancement of these projects will provide an approximate fund balance for the TOPS program of \$8 million; however, 90% will be in the open space category. The Watkins property expenditure has been accounted for prior to the advancement of these projects.
- Stratton, Sinton, Bluestem and University Park Open Space Management Plans have been

accounted for in the budget.

Discussion included: Percentage of the open space budget goes to stewardship; \$6.5 million is currently available in the open space budget; parking concerns at Red Rock Canyon and providing possible overflow parking; Bristol Mesa Open Space general fund consideration and homeless concerns with freeway underpass trails.

Adjournment

- Motion to adjourn at 10:43 a.m. – 1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Sarah Musick, Approved - Unanimous
- Motion to enter a Closed Executive Session – 1st – Nancy Hobbs, 2nd – Becky Wegner, Approved - Unanimous

4. Closed Executive Session: Discussion pertaining to a property matter